

~~TOP SECRET~~

HR70-14

Copy 2 of 8

APPROVED FOR
RELEASE DATE:
20-Jul-2011

2 June 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Intelligence)

SUBJECT: Comment on Clandestine Report on Soviet ICBM Program

REFERENCE: Clandestine Report No. [REDACTED] (CSDB-3/647,058)
16 May 1961

1. This is to inform you of Task Force reaction to the recent clandestine report referenced above. A specific recommendation is included in Paragraph 7 below.

The report asserts that the Soviet ICBM program has encountered serious difficulties, there is virtually no deployment at present, but in a few years the situation will be quite different. (A fuller discussion of the main points of the report is contained in Tab A attached.) If true, these assertions have the most serious implications not only on our estimate of the Soviet ICBM program and military posture but also on US policy. Taken literally, the report states that the USSR does not now have and will not have for some time a significant military capability with ICBMs and indicates that it has successfully and grossly deceived the West (as well as the Soviet public) for years as to the strength of Soviet nuclear striking forces. This would mean that Soviet policy is being conducted from a real position of military weakness under a cover of a world impression of Soviet strength generated by their spectacular achievements in space flight. (These implications are discussed more fully in Tab B attached.)

The problem with this report is that its validity cannot be assessed in the usual manner. Although available evidence from other sources can be interpreted to be consistent with this new information, the report is puzzling, principally because it lacks specifics. This lack of specificity makes it virtually impossible to evaluate the accuracy of the information.

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

4. To place the problem of evaluating this report in fuller perspective it may be useful to consider the hypothetical situation of its asserting precisely the opposite. Let us assume that the [REDACTED] source under similar circumstances stated that ICBM production and deployment had been intensive since 1959, that the test program had been highly successful, that the space program showed military strength and that weapon accuracy and reliability were high. It would be possible to survey available evidence from other sources and select items which fit and appeared to reinforce the substance of such a report. This is also true for the report as it now stands. The hypothetical situation simply highlights the ultimate dependence on the evaluation of the source and sub-sources in assessing the report.

5. This source has produced several "documentary" reports on Soviet missile systems. The specifics of the technical aspects of Soviet missiles generally checked with our evidence and estimates; however, none of these reports has been on long-range ballistic missiles. [REDACTED] we have been assured that the veracity of the source has been tested extensively and has been established in an operational context. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Furthermore, [REDACTED] assures us that on the basis of preliminary information in their possession and not yet published the content of the report should be taken most seriously.

6. Because its acceptance as an accurate reflection of the status of the Soviet ICBM program will modify substantially our estimates and could cause importance changes in US policy, it is necessary that we who are assessing this program have access to almost all the information available so that we can make an independent judgment of the validity of this report. We have discussed this problem [REDACTED] and they have been as cooperative as they feel operational security permits, but these discussions have not been sufficient for us to weigh this key aspect independently in assessing the report's validity. Even if we obtain full access to all the information, there is no guarantee that the validity of the report could be fully accepted or rejected.

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~Change sheet~~

[Redacted]

7. It is therefore recommended that we inform the DD/P, or if necessary the Director, of this problem and request full access to the information available. The decision on our access to this information depends on weighing the risk of underestimating the validity of the report against the risks to the operation. I feel strongly that the need for the proper interpretation of the report and its consequences outweighs the potential operational risks which might arise from making this information available to a very few individuals in the DD/L.

8. As you know, the draft of MIE 11-3-61 has been completed and is to be presented to the USIB on 6 June 1961. Coordination of this draft was well under way when the clandestine report was issued, and the representatives did not have the opportunity to evaluate its implications fully. As a consequence the estimate does not reflect either an acceptance or a rejection of this information. It has affected the estimate in only one particular: a very short footnote covering some parts of the report was added in the middle of Annex C. In light of the extensive changes which would be necessary if the report is accepted as valid, it may be necessary to withdraw the current draft of the estimate from the USIB agenda. //

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

~~TOP SECRET~~

[Redacted]

~~TOP SECRET~~TAB AComments on Principal Assertions of Clandestine Report

1. Khrushchev's statements are largely bluff and based on accomplishments not yet or only partly achieved -- they are intended to create a deliberately false image of current Soviet ICBM strength.

COMMENT: It has been obvious from the beginning that Khrushchev has sought every opportunity to capitalize on the propaganda value of the ICBM and has used demonstrated satellite or space success to generate a parallel impression of ICBM military power. Khrushchev's early statements in Oct-Nov 1957 immediately after the Sputnik successes illustrated this most clearly. These remarks, made in press interviews, patently overstated the nonexistent military ICBM capability at that time. Although the theme has continued and the propaganda drive has been apparent, the passage of several years and developments in other aspects of the program have made it much more difficult to assess the accuracy of subsequent remarks.

On Soviet Armed Forces Day in early 1959, at a time when Soviet ICBMs almost certainly were not yet operationally deployed, the highest military leaders were repeatedly asserting that the armed forces were equipped with rockets of all types, including the ICBM. There are in general a variety of examples of implicit exaggeration in Soviet policy statements which appear at least consistent with the source's view that "...Khrushchev's basic idea...is...to represent that which he does not have or that which he has in insignificant quantities as something he has already in hand."

There have been occasional private comments [redacted] deploring the type of propaganda exploitation which placed Soviet achievements on a pedestal so far above those of the U.S. There are indications for example, that some Soviet scientists connected with the space program genuinely expected the U.S. to beat the USSR into space with the first satellite and that there is considerable Soviet scientific admiration for various U.S. space or missile achievements.

Perhaps the major aspect in a deliberately false policy line of the type suggested is that if Khrushchev "and the Presidium" are

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

grossly misleading the West, they are also grossly misleading the bulk of the Soviet nation and its allies. The implications of having at present virtually no ICBM force, and the degree to such a deception might be maintained successfully over an extended period cannot be fully measured. If the apparent international repercussions to revelation of the U-2 flights are a criterion, the consequences of public exposure of related ICBM weakness could be shattering.

2. There has been virtually no ICBM production, deployment or training to date, the current weapon is still in test, is inaccurate and unwieldy--the ICBM program has encountered one failure after another.

COMMENT: The report actually is contradictory on the question of current ICBM deployment. [REDACTED] is reported to have said in early 1961 that the Soviet Union has "in its arsenal" (intercontinental) missiles that can reach South America and the U.S. "but not accurately." He further implies, however, that the current force is probably limited, by stating that "in order to get anywhere one has to increase production tremendously and to train cadres." The source, at the same time, makes the much stronger statement that "these are test missiles which are still undergoing further tests and are not on bases. The USSR does not have the capability of even firing one or two." The latter is more reconcilable with the bulk of current evidence from other sources if figurative rather than literal.

It is true that the Soviet ICBM is still undergoing testing, although the precise objectives are unknown. There is no direct evidence that the Soviet ICBM program has encountered one "failure after another"--on the contrary, in observable aspects it has appeared generally successful, and it is probable that at least limited deployment has taken place. If the assertion of repeated failure is true it would most probably relate to test objectives such as guidance and control or these in combination with related setbacks in production and deployment. Although conclusive evidence of achieved accuracy is lacking, there has been little indication that it is grossly poor as implied by the general officer. If subsequent reanalysis of impact and other data were to reveal that relatively poor accuracy was achieved in past firings to Kamchatka, then of course the possibility would increase materially that the system has not been deployed extensively.

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

HR70-14

The current ICBM is extremely large and is unwieldy, and smaller size and compactness (achievable in part from higher impulse propellants) undoubtedly will be sought in any following system. It has not been possible to determine the effect of its current size on feasibility of deployment, although it has not been thought to be limiting.

We have been unable to find conclusive evidence of volume production of the current ICBM system. Khrushchev, of course, alluded to "mass production of ICBMs of various types" in early 1960. If the fragmentary and somewhat ambiguous evidence of ICBM-related production at the few facilities now suspect should prove negative it would virtually confirm the over-all substance of this report; if however, additional evidence shows that ICBM production was phased from the developer (probably Kaliningrad) to a volume producer in early 1959 as implied by some evidence, it would cast considerable doubt on the findings (although not necessarily on the source).

The status of evidence and variation of interpretation on Soviet ICBM deployment is well known. It is consistent generally with the general officer's remarks but only with a somewhat loose interpretation of the source's remarks. The report is quite consistent, however, with the general absence to date of concrete evidence of ICBM troop training.

3. Preparations are being carried out intensively for future mass production with the entire economy and policy geared to eventual large numbers -- in 1963 or 1964. There will be a different picture.

COMMENT: There is considerable evidence of impending intensification in the ICBM field, including indications of a new system entering development. Based on the other assertions by the source much of this activity should involve a basically new, considerably smaller, vehicle using higher impulse propellants. The evidence consistent with this view is not yet analyzed in sufficient detail to be conclusive. In any event, a system only now entering development could hardly pose a substantial military threat prior to the period cited in this report. There are indications in some other areas that major changes could be forthcoming. For example, the recently inaugurated air route between Tyuratam and Dnepropetrovsk, the location of a primary missile production facility (DAZ); at the same time there is evidence that in the next several years DAZ will phase out of a large scale civilian tractor production program which has been a regular part of its responsibility since 1954. This presumably would free additional plant capacity for other production if some new civilian product is not introduced.

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

TAB-B

Implications of the Clandestine Report

If the report is true, many aspects of the estimate of the Soviet ICBM program in the current draft of RIE 11-8-61 would be misleading if not wrong. In the conclusions to that estimate we state:

The Soviet leaders, particularly Khrushchev, have been deeply impressed by what they regard as a major improvement of their strategic position resulting from their achievements with long-range ballistic missiles....

We believe that the direct and indirect evidence supports the view that: (a) the USSR has been conducting a generally successful ICBM program, at a deliberate rather than an extremely urgent pace; (b) that USSR is building toward a force of several hundred operational ICBM launchers, to be acquired within the next few years.

On the basis of our sense of tempo of the program and our judgment as to the relationship between what we have detected and what we are likely to have missed, we estimate that the probable Soviet force level in mid-1961 is in the range of 50-100 operational ICBM launchers, together with the necessary operational missile inventories and trained crews. This estimate should be regarded as a general approximation. We estimate that the program will continue to be deliberately paced and result in force levels about as follows: 100-200 operational launchers in mid-1962, 150-300 in mid-1963 and 200-400 in mid-1964. Some of the launchers activated in the 1963-64 period will probably be for a new and improved ICBM system.

A full acceptance of the report would imply that the Soviets have not been conducting a generally successful ICBM program and that they do not have 50-100 operational ICBM launchers at present.

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

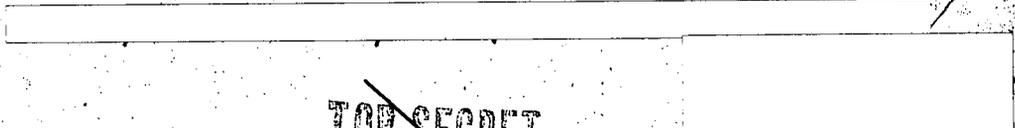
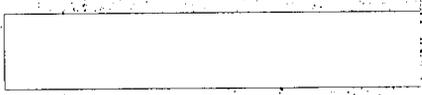


A reasonable interpretation of the report together with other information would lead to the following description of the Soviet program.

1. The Soviets have developed a reliable booster which they have used and probably will continue to use in their space programs. From this they are deriving considerable psychological and political advantage in creating the impression that they possess a formidable ICBM force.
2. This booster has not developed into a satisfactory ICBM weapon system, perhaps because of poor accuracy and difficulties involved in deploying so large a vehicle.
3. They are developing a new ICBM with better weapon system characteristics which will be more easily deployed. This new system may now be undergoing tests at Area C at Tyuratam.
4. Because of the limitations of the present ICBM as a deployable weapon, there are only a few deployed at present. This situation will probably continue until the new system becomes available operationally.
5. If the new system is satisfactory and there are no major difficulties encountered, the USSR will probably have a high priority program to deploy this weapon in the hundreds.

The USSR would probably have the following numbers of ICBMs on launcher. Comparable numbers from the current draft of NIE 11-8-61 are presented in parentheses.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Potential New Estimate</u>	<u>Draft of NIE 11-8-61</u>
Mid-1961	25 or less	(50 - 100)
Mid-1962	25 - 50	(100 - 200)
Mid-1963	75 - 150	(150 - 300)
Mid-1964	175 - 250	(200 - 400)
Mid-1965	300 - 400	



~~TOP SECRET~~